National Union of Women Teachers

LONDON UNIT.

ANOTHER VICTORY

Miss Agnes Dawson, J.P., L.C.C.
Chairman, L.C.C. General Purposes Committee.
Chairman, L.C.C. Special Services (Education) Sub-Committee.
N.U.W.T. London Unit Advisory Officer.

The Removal of the Marriage Bar

Tuesday, July 16th marked another victory in the determined struggle of women teachers to secure equal civil and professional rights with their men colleagues. On that day the marriage disqualification operating against women teachers was removed, largely through the instrumentality of Miss Agnes Dawson, J.P., L.C.C.

All thinking men and women should recall the steps in the fight that brought about this result. Many people are unaware that there has been any struggle at all, because they have not been associated with an active Union which *opposes unceasingly* all that threatens education and the status of women. It is well, therefore, to remind ourselves of the vigilance of the N.U.W.T. in this matter.

In **1906** the L.C.C. made a Standing Order that all women appointed thereafter, except teachers, doctors, and certain others in exceptional circumstances, should be required to resign their posts on marriage.

In March, **1923**, the Council decided that teachers also should be included in this Standing Order.

From that time on, the N.U.W.T. *and no other Union*, has carried on a continuous campaign against this marriage bar.

In **1921** and **1922** (*i.e.*, when the marriage bar was threatened only), the London Unit was in touch with all other feminist societies, interviewing L.C.C. members, writing letters, etc.

In February, **1923**, it forwarded to the L.C.C. a resolution in which the L.U. reiterated "its emphatic protest against the L.C.C. Education Committee's recommendation to force women teachers to resign on marriage".

In **1924** the L.U. pressed for the employment of married women in a supply capacity, as a step towards the rescinding of the Order.

In **1925** Miss Dawson, in sub-committee, moved a resolution along similar lines, and subsequently, this much was conceded as a result of the extraordinary shortage of Supply Teachers during severe epidemics.

In **1926**, activities included letters to M.Ps., and a deputation on The Married Women's Employment Act.

In **1929** the General Purposes Committee of the L.C.C. received a deputation from the London Unit on the subject, and from this time onwards, the N.U.W.T., with other progressive women's organisations, redoubled its efforts. Meetings were held in various districts, and behind the scenes in The County Hall, Miss Dawson kept the question alive.

In **1933** the N.U.W.T. helped to organise a Mass Meeting at the Westminster Central Hall on "Should Married Women Earn?"; a member of the Central Council of the N.U.W.T., Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, was one of the speakers on a distinguished platform, and the following resolution was passed: "That this Mass Meeting protests against the practice of dismissing women solely on the ground of marriage, and demands for them the same rights that are accorded other citizens."

Throughout **1934** and **1935** the work was intensified. Mrs. Key (L.U. Committee Member) represented the N.U.W.T. on a strong deputation to the General Purposes Committee organised by the Open Door Council, when the case for the abolition of the marriage bar was incontrovertibly put. Letters reiterating the views of the N.U.W.T. were also sent to every member of the Committee, and these activities, combined with Miss Dawson's persistence, made it impossible for the Committee to ignore the women's demands. By never shelving the question herself, nor allowing others to do so, Miss Dawson, now Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, insisted that the demand should receive the attention it deserved.

As a result, she moved the resolution brought forward by the General Purposes Committee to the full Council on Tuesday, July 16th, whereby women teachers and women doctors were allowed to retain their posts on marriage after August 1st, 1935. In spite of the introduction of a wrecking amendment by the Opposition, the resolution was finally carried by 74 votes to 37.

The Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, J.P., Leader of the Council, after listening to the debate on the motion, was moved to congratulate Miss Dawson, in that, as Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, she had been able to help to restore to women teachers the right to marry and retain their posts. He described Miss Dawson, now "an exceedingly able Member of the Council," as a veteran in this cause, reminding the Council that she had been a leader in the fight against the marriage bar when it was introduced in 1923, and that she had never ceased to work for its removal. He concluded: "Miss Dawson is a champion of women, ever an aggressive champion for the cause."

Only a Union which works for the complete emancipation of women can secure the recognition of their just demands. When women have achieved real human equality with men they will be able to co-operate with them in the tasks which lie before all true educationists.

The N.U.W.T. will continue to work for the recognition of women as responsible citizens, of equal value to the state as men. It therefore strongly invites *all* women teachers to join the Union *now* and thus help to attain the next measure of freedom for women.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

To be sent to:—The Organising Secretary, 41 Cromwell Road, S.W.7.

Annual Subscription: £1 per member to General Fund (including Legal Aid, Sustentation and "The Woman Teacher") plus Local Subscription of 10s.

New Members admitted at any time before the end of the financial year (September 30th) on payment of the proportionate subscription of 2/6 per month (this not to apply to lapsed members).

I,..... (Name in full)
apply to be enrolled as a member of the National Union of Women Teachers.

Status (Certificated or Uncertificated) .....

Private Address.....

School Address .....

Provided or Non-Provided .....

Local Education Authority .....

State whether (a) Permanently Appointed; (b) Unattached or (c) On "Supply" Service .....

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Signed.....

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Date.....

J. W. SPARKS, THE PRINTING HOUSE, FOREST GATE.